

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council

COUNCILLOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

MUNICIPAL YEAR 2013 / 2014



Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council operates under executive arrangements. Responsibility for the authority's functions is overseen by a Leader and Cabinet made up of Councillors from the party or group with the most members. The allocation of Chair and Vice Chair posts is also based by law on the number of seats each party or group has, and this number again will have influence on the appointment of Councillors to outside bodies.

Opinions, advice, conclusions and other information in this report shall be understood as neither given nor endorsed by the authority or on its behalf. It is a report by the Councillor referred to below regarding their key activities over the period from the day the date of the Annual General Meeting on 14th May 2013 to the Annual General meeting on 21st May 2014. It is provided for the information of constituents and for no other purpose.

Councillor:	DAVID JONES
Political Party:	LABOUR
Electoral Division:	TOWN

Committee Membership, Roles and Attendance

This section relates to membership as an elected member, not in a personal capacity. Democratic Services has provided information on committee membership and attendance for Council Committees. However, where Councillors are a member of any other committees, they have provided details from their own records.

Council Committees: 98% Attendance

Full Council
Cabinet
Joint Negotiating and Consultative Group (JNCG)

External Committees and Outside Bodies:

Active Travel Panel
Capita Glamorgan Consultancy Joint Venture Committee.
Communities First Cluster Board (North Cluster)
County Borough Supplies
Customer Services SMB
Cyfarthfa Castle/ Park/ Leat/ Tramway/Gardens
Economic and Regeneration and Tourism Board
Emergency Planning
Ffos-y-Fran Liaison Committee. Vice-Chair
Flood Risk Management
Heritage Champion
Heritage Forum
Job Evaluation Panel (J.E)
Joint Negotiating Consultancy Board
Merthyr Tydfil Care and Repair Management Board
Merthyr Tydfil Town Centre Partnership(which now includes Treharris & Bedlinog town centres)*
North Cluster Community First Board
Old Town Hall Project Board
PATROL Joint Committee Services (Substitute Member)
Parc Taf Bargoed Steering Group.
Pontmorlais Townscape Heritage Initiative
School Governor at Ysgol Santes Tydfil plus on the Complaints Committee of the school
South East Wales Transport Alliance (until its cessation in April 2014)

My Work as a Portfolio Member

There are six elected members with Executive roles who sit on Cabinet. The Leader chairs the committee and each of the others has responsibility for a specific portfolio of services. This section has identified the role of the individual Councillor and work undertaken in that role.

Portfolio for Technical & Environmental Services

It has been a very challenging year regarding certain aspects of my Portfolio. Some of the main issues are highlighted below

We have opted to put our Leisure and Culture Facilities into a Trust. This is a decision that has been forced on us by the budgetary cuts from Westminster. This option was taken after much discussion and consultation and will mean that the facilities remain in the ownership of the County Borough and Service provision will at least remain as at present. The new Trust will also be able to apply for external funding that is not available to the Council.

This past year has also been difficult for our Waste Management Department, where we failed to hit our target of 52% of materials being re-cycled despite a massive effort by the team (we hit 49%). Along with the fact that we used 102% of our land-fill allowance could have meant that we were fined approximately £165,000. The fine was waived mainly because collectively the “whole of Wales” hit the Welsh Government target. We have developed a Waste Management Business Plan in partnership with Welsh Government, WRAP and our consultants Eunomia to improve waste and recycling services over the coming year in an effort to achieve the challenging target set by Welsh Government of 70% recovery by 2025.

On a more positive note there has been a lot to be proud of and I have been actively involved with the delivery of the Old town Hall / Redhouse, Project, the completion of Penderyn Square and the continuing works on the River Taff Central Link and the College green, also the works at Treharris Square and the work on the two Care homes at the Gurnos and Treharris. Most, if not all, of these Projects have been delivered without too many issues from the general public, mainly because of an ever improving corporate communications team and strategy.

Our parks have seen much investment and improvement over this past year and I have been involved in the Groups which have produced the following outcomes. The four feeder ponds at Cyfarthfa have been totally reconstructed, along with a new network of red trails which have been constructed for public use.. The miniature railway has been extended and additional engines added to the stock to improve the facilities provided.

I have regularly attended the meetings which have led to improvements to the entrance of Taf Bargoed Park, which has now been completed to create a scenic, DDA compliant access from Treharris, Other works include Treharris Square and the Building Enhancement Schemes in the area, such as Cig y Mynydd and the Colliers Cwtch.

As part of my Portfolio role I have been involved in Gethin Bike Park Wales Project which is now completed and proving to be a very well attended facility, with 50,000 visitors from all over the UK coming to Merthyr Tydfil in its first 10 months of operation

One of the most pleasing duties I have performed over the past year as a Portfolio Member was to present the INSPORT Ribbon and Silver Award to our Leisure Staff. This is a scheme where disabled users are offered the chance to get involved in various sports they may not otherwise get an opportunity to try.

As a member of the Pontmorlais Townscape Heritage Initiative it is pleasing that after a very slow initial take-up local premises owners have taken up the Grant funding available to improve the aesthetics of the area.

Working closely with my Officers I have overseen the purchase and demolition of the Hollies Health Centre and the old Railway Club in preparation for their relevant developments.

I have worked closely with our Regeneration Officers, who have successfully secured the second largest Vibrant and Viable Places funding of some £12.700,000 which will be used to improve the area from the General Hospital to Church Street

I make every attempt to attend as many meetings as possible ,as my attendance record shows, though there are times when I am physically not able to be in two places at the same time. I do however “catch up” as soon as possible with my colleagues and Officers.

My Work as a Local Councillor

Under this heading, Councillors have identified the work undertaken on behalf of local constituents. Reference has also been made to any major initiatives or special projects they have been associated with on behalf of MTCBC, which have a direct impact on local constituents.

Together with my three Ward colleagues I regularly organise “street surgeries”, choosing a different area each month to go out to our constituents and discuss any issues they may have..

I regularly attend PACT meetings where constituents have an opportunity to raise issues with councillors, the police and other Partnership members

I make every attempt to respond to emails and telephone queries as soon as possible, though normally within 24 hours.

On a more positive note, I am pleased to say that I have supported many Grant Funding applications from various organisations and groups.

Learning and Development

In the Learning and Development section, Councillors have demonstrated instances where they have taken the opportunity for personal development by taking part in initiatives and events aimed at improving their understanding and awareness.

I have taken part in various Bob’s Business Training and have attended all pre-meeting presentations I have been available for.

I have also attended various meetings in other Authorities to learn from the way they provide Services that we are looking to replicate (Conwy and Denbighshire. Waste Management and Education respectively)

Other Activities and Issues

Under this heading, Councillors have provided information on themselves to demonstrate the ‘personal’ aspect of their role as a local Councillor which they believe would be of interest to constituents.

As I keep a public house, I regularly get constituents “dropping in” to seek information and or advice.

Councillor David Jones
Date: July 2014